UNITED NATIONS **ST**

Secretariat

ST/IC/1996/10
2 February 1996

INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: CONDUCT OF STAFF IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES*

1. At the start of 1996, the present circular is issued to remind all staff members again that their conduct in relation to government representatives must conform to their duties and obligations stemming from the Charter of the United Nations and the Staff Regulations and Rules, and to reiterate the importance that the Administration attaches to these duties and obligations.

2. The basic principles are set out in the oath of office that each international civil servant is required to sign:

> "I solemnly swear (undertake, affirm, promise) to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as an international civil servant of the United Nations, to discharge those functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to the Organization."

3. The obligation of loyalty requires each staff member to respect decisions taken by the Secretary-General. Attempts by staff to seek support from government representatives towards obtaining a change in those decisions are inconsistent with this obligation. The following illustrates the application of those principles in two different situations.

---

* Personnel Manual No. 1120.

Consideration of proposals made by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly

4. Staff members are precluded from advocating with government representatives positions at variance with those adopted officially. As explained in paragraph 26 of the Report on Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service: 1/

> "It is obviously an intolerable practice for a staff member to prepare for the use of a governmental or other official representative - whether upon request or not - speeches, arguments or proposals on political or other controversial questions which are under discussion in a representative organ. It is equally improper for an official to plead before a representative committee, or an advisory expert group, for appropriations beyond those requested by the Executive Head, for expansion of the activities of his [or her] particular department or service, or for any point of view at variance with that of the Executive Head."

5. This is of particular relevance for the consideration of programme budgets which the Secretary-General submits to the General Assembly. A programme budget is issued after careful review and study; it aims to ensure that the work of the Organization is executed with no more than the resources indispensable for that work. All staff members are expected to assist the Secretary-General in maintaining the administrative discipline and integrity of the Secretariat and in enabling him to discharge his responsibilities as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization. Accordingly, no proposals having organizational or financial implications are to be made, formally or informally, by any member of the staff without prior approval of the Secretary-General, and no effort is to be made by individual staff members to obtain directly from Member States resources above and beyond those proposed in the budget.

Attempts by staff to seek the influence of Governments in career-related matters

6. Staff members are precluded from endeavouring to obtain personal advancement or otherwise better their career prospects by seeking support from any Government or Mission. The principles are explained as follows in paragraph 28 of the Report on Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service: 1/

> "Adequate arrangements should and do exist within the international organizations for a staff member to secure fair treatment in respect of his [or her] personal administrative status. It is thus inexcusable for an official to lobby with governmental representatives or members of legislative bodies in order to secure support for improvements in his [or her] personal situation or that of another staff member, or for blocking or reversing unfavourable decisions regarding his [or her] status. The proper method for raising staff problems is through the normal channels provided in each organization. The Board trusts that governmental representatives or members of legislative bodies, in turn, will neither accede to any such requests, nor on their own initiative intervene in such administrative matters."

7. Failure by staff members to comply with their duties and obligations in their relations with government representatives will be viewed as an act of misconduct, and will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary proceedings under chapter X of the Staff Rules.

Notes

1/ COORD/CIVIL SERVICE/5, 1986 edition.